

**PRICES FORK VILLAGE PLAN  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**Kick-Off Workshop for the Prices Fork Village Plan**

***“Create The Vision”***

March 19, 2005  
8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. at the Grange

**NOTES FROM FLIPCHARTS**

**1. WHOLE GROUP BRAINSTORMING  
(strengths, opportunities, threats, weaknesses)**

**STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES**

- Tight knit community – will attract people in the future – want to see it stay that way
- Natural beauty of surroundings – fields, forests
- Close proximity to Blacksburg and services
- Historic context of the Village – why and how it developed and grew; It's "Reason for Being". Newcomers often unaware of its history (have descendants of Hessian soldiers in community)
- Affordable homes (Land is cheaper but not always houses)
- The Prices Fork School and its reputation
- Recreation on New River and surrounding area
  - Kayaking, hunting, fishing, biking
- Blacksburg is one of the top 50 cities in U.S. to live in
  - (The secret is out, will create growth pressure)
- High school is one of top 25 in the U.S.

## WEAKNESSES/THREATS

- Development
- The University (strength and weakness) attracts growth to the area
- Traffic – Volume and existing road infrastructure
- Threat of creating a "bedroom community" – already partly there
- Tech gives stable economy but has a lot of untaxed land in the County (40% of all land in County is untaxable)
  - Sales tax provides some income – but sales taxes is about one quarter as large as the real estate taxes in the County
  - Tech reduces out-migration of the younger generation
- Tech is a big question mark – Community frustration over land swap in the 1980s
  - Tech said it is going to keep student population stable, but it will bring more graduate students which will put pressure on housing in the surrounding area
- Can't walk on any of the roads in the Village – kids can't walk to school – lack of bike/pedestrian links
- Tech's Corporate Research Center – works to develop businesses, but they don't pay taxes
- County has asked State to look at amount of taxable land in the County
- Can we influence what Tech builds on its land?
  - Technically, County has no formal control but considerable influence
  - The Village Plan makes it less likely that State will ignore County
  - Town may reconsider Southgate extension in order to channel roads and traffic to Corporate Research Center
  - Corporate Research Center may "incubate" new companies that will ultimately expand into surrounding area
  - Tech makes some limited contributions for use of County's facilities
- Could we zone Tech's land against commercial land?
  - Yes – this doesn't preclude Tech overriding the zoning as long as they own it. BUT – it could control the land if there was a future land swap with private developers.
  - A plan could also influence the Tech to work with the County
- Existing Tech building in village are already research related – this use could expand

- Tech could buy Wall Farm or other areas and build research there
  - However, it's not in Tech's Master Plan to expand beyond areas they already own

## **2. SMALL GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE**

### **(Treasured Places, Areas to Protect, Areas to Change/Improve)**

#### **GROUP 1**

##### **Treasured Places**

- Historical District:
  - Extend through Fork, Schoolhouse
  - through trailer park
  - Johnson property
  
- Also for Preservation:
  - Wall Farm
  - Price's Mountain (view)
  - New River
  - Various Cemeteries
  - View of drive when entering village (scenic)
  - Prices Railroad and tunnel
  - "Lover's Leap"

##### **Protect From Change:**

- Scenic Drive from Price's Fork to River
- No traffic lights
- Do not widen Price's Fork Road
- Keep separation between town and village
- Mrs. Kinner's 59 acres (will donate to Tech)?
- School (protect)

### **Change/Improve:**

- Thomas Lane – needs outlet
  - traffic management/alternative connections on Prices Fork Road
- Clean Up Fork Area
  - make community park

### **GROUP 2**

#### **Treasured Places**

- School
- Entrance to Price's Fork
- Church
- Grange
- "Fork" store – don't take it away
- Price's Fork Elementary School – re-use building if it can't be an elementary school

#### **Protect From Change**

- Creek/Mountain – protect from high amount of development
- The Fork – historical structures
- School still in Village
- If school moves, use current school property as park/green space
- Scenic views along Price's Fork Road – support Agricultural uses
- Not residential development – school is OK

### **Change/Improve**

- Connect Montgomery Farms to Blacksburg Middle School and Price's Fork Elementary School by Bike Trail

- Improve Thomas Lane/Entrance into Montgomery Farms
- Add second access to Montgomery Farms
- Bypass road to south of Village
- Improve Parkland – connect to Hethwood trail
- Cluster development instead of 6 to 8 acre lots spread over mountainside

### **GROUP 3**

#### **Treasured Places**

- Old Fort Property (Wolfehouse)
- School (elementary)
- Gateway to Price's Fork (historic houses)
- Snuffy's!
- View of Brush Mountain
- View of Price Mountain

#### **Protect From Change**

- Rural nature of Brookfield Road
- Wetlands
- Farmland (Thornhill, MacDonald and Virginia Vaughn, Virginia Tech land)

#### **Change/Improve**

- Thomas Lane – especially to be widened for fire/emergency vehicles
- Merrimac and Price's Fork Road intersection
- Thomas Lane and Price's Fork Road intersection
  - people pass cars turning onto Thomas by going through ditch

- Slow down the McCoy Road/Tucker Road intersection
- Create Price's Fork Bypass to slow down Price's Fork Road traffic and to create alternate route for commuters going to Blacksburg and Radford
  - -growth corridor?
- Extend Shepard Drive and direct development there
- Add Thomas Lane bypass
- Add houses along a Thomas Lane bypass (leaving Thornhill, Virginia Vaughan, MacDonald Farms open)

### **3. SMALL GROUP VISIONING EXERCISE (Describe Vision for Prices Fork in 20-25 years)**

#### **VISION – Group 1**

- Preservation and restoration of history in Price's Fork
- Have local history in the schools so next generation will grow up knowing it.
- Interpretive programs/markers to show history
- Not a lot of large scale commercial development (e.g. mall "big box")
- Some small new development that "fits in" and defines Price's Fork as a village – "anchors it"
- Art museum – Music – local Appalachian cultural activities – "concerts in the Park"
- Community Park, family gathering place (act as "anchors" for community)
- Welcome Sign and clear limits or entry into Village
- A sense that you're entering the Village
- People that know each other – know their families (bring food when you're sick)
  - not a transient place
- A place where generations grow up and stay

- Continue Mom & Pop stores – no "Troutville"
- Less Traffic (may mean new roads)
  - slow existing traffic
- More family activities
  - Something like the Price's Fork Fair
- Village starts at Merrimac Road East
- Want to control destiny – have governance and town meetings
- OK to have most folks work outside the Village
- Want to see community grow – will add vitality
- Growth that is scaled appropriately to school capacity
- Elderly housing – All age groups in the Village
- Maintain a community school in the Village
- The building, the site and the function of the school are important, but maybe OK if they have to go to new school in the future.
- Keep road narrow but slow traffic down
- Plan for affordable housing – use creative planning techniques

## **VISION - Group 2**

- Keep it the way it is – historical
  - Thomas lane improved
- Children have sense of place
  - are valued
  - know history
- Rural heritage (scenic views)
- Natural Resources (forest, mountain views, wildlife)
- Place to come home to

- Rural history is rich
- Country living
- Know/recognize people
- Want people to contribute – not bedroom community
- Places to eat and offices (doctors)
  - Provide something so you don't have to go to Blacksburg
- Don't have people move in just because of land availability
- Little business area (few things available)
- Safe place
- Self-contained village
- Parks, trails
  - connectivity (especially Phillips Acres and Montgomery Farms)
- Community Advisory Board
  - control appearance, signage, etc.
  - type of house built, setbacks (Planning Commission)
- Build lower density toward village and higher density toward Blacksburg
- Virginia Tech property should maintain Agricultural tradition
- Question about closing Tucker Road
- Additional roads connect to Merrimac and Southgate
- Some intensification but pattern new architecture after the historical district

### **VISION - Group 3**

- Cultural Attraction
- Pastoral sense of community
- Park

- Scenic Trail
- Managed Growth – some clustered development
- Open Space – large lot/common space with small lots
- Lot Diversity
- Preserve History
- Connectivity (Southgate "parkway")
- NO Industrial Park
- Affordable Housing
- Daycare – enhance village services
- Improve Mobility
  - footpaths to schools, connect community
- Nature Center
- Post Office